their strategical combination, it would have enabled them to achieve victory before the end of 1916, if not sooner. It is incredible that this Conference was the first occasion on which so obvious a principle had ever been seriously advanced and considered fully. It had not even been urged at any Conference before November, 1916.

When at the conclusion of the first plenary session, M. Pokrovski submitted a series of questions which the Conference was to discuss at its subsequent meetings and commissions, he specifically included this issue, setting it out in the following terms :—

> " On what principle will be settled the quantity of war material that will be furnished to Russia ? Will it be judged possible—in order to obtain the best results—to distribute the available munitions in such a way as to assure to each of the Allied Armies a certain minimum ? In this event, ought not this minimum of material to be proportioned to the number of active units and to the importance of each front, alike in respect of its length and in respect of the problem which confronts it ? "

The carrying into effect of this proposition was, as it turned out in the subsequent discussions, handicapped by the difficulty of getting goods into Russia, and, once they were in Russia, of transporting them promptly

Difficulty of Russia

to the requisite destination. There was first the shortage of shipping tonnage, resulting from the activity of German submarines ; then the congestion and bad management of the few Russian ports; the shortage of railway lines and rolling stock, and inefficient management of